

REMARKS

The rejection based upon 103(e) is believed to be improper since this sub-section of the Statute refers to the "date of invention" by Applicant. That date is not known and cannot be assumed to be after the Filing Date of the subject Application having a Priority Date of 14 October 1998.

With respect to the claims, former Claims 1 - 5 have been cancelled and replaced by new Claims 6 - 27 of which only 4 are Independent. The new claims recite "upper slips, upper grips and/or lower grips" in one manner or other. The Pruet system is totally divergent from all of these elements and, in fact, without at least an upper slip, his tubular would rocket upwardly under the several thousand PSI existing in the bore hole and within his housing. Accordingly, his system would be totally inoperative such that this reference should be withdrawn on this ground alone.

In addition to the foregoing, it will be noted that each of the dependent claims recite further structure (or methods) which are nowhere found in the reference. For example, Claims 7 - 8 recite the location of the slip means. Claim 8 recites that Applicant's coupler is "below" the rotary table; i.e., in direct opposition to the Pruet system.

Claim 10 further adds "upper grip means" which are nowhere found in the reference; i.e., the Kelly rotates the tubular, not any rotary grip means as defined in the subject invention.

Claim 11 adds that both the upper grip means and upper slip means pass through the divider means.

Claims 12 - 17 are dependent on allowable independent Claim 6 and further add novel structure not found in the reference.

Method Claims 18 - 21 recite: "in which method tubular members are secured against upper movement".

Claims 22 - 23 recite "hoist means" for accomplishing the totally novel hand-over-hand operation as described only in Applicant's Specification.

Claims 24 - 27 recite the novel structure of "upper and lower grip means" neither of which are taught or suggested in the Pruet system.

With respect to the cited but not applied references, none of these remotely suggest Applicant's novel and non-obvious structure or methods as pointed out above. In addition, an Information Disclosure Statement is being filed under separate

cover. Each of Claims 6 - 27 define over all such references for the reasons stated above as well as numerous other reasons.

Accordingly, all of the claims now present in the subject Application are firmly believed to be clearly allowable and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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